

“Service, Suffrage, and Swing: World War I Era in Delaware”

-19th annual Chautauqua tent shows to take place in Lewes, Del. from June 18 to 22, 2017-

(DOVER, Del.—May 19, 2017)—America’s participation in “the war to end all wars” will be brought to life during the 19th annual Chautauqua tent show, “Service, Suffrage, and Swing: World War I Era in Delaware,” that will take place at a variety of downtown Lewes, Del. locations from June 18–22, 2017. Co-sponsored by the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs and the Lewes Historical Society, the five-day event is being held in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the United States’ entry into the global conflict that was fought between 1914 and 1918. Except where noted, admission is free and open to the public. Go here for a [complete listing of activities](#). For additional information, call 302-645-1148.



Neill Hartley of the American Historical Theatre will portray

President Woodrow
Wilson on June 19,
2017.

A unique mixture of education and entertainment, Lewes' Chautauqua will be held under a large tent and will feature re-enactors from the [American Historical Theatre](#) who take on the personas of celebrated historical figures, educating and entertaining audiences as they bring the past to life. Audience members are encouraged to ask questions and interact with the featured characters who will include President Woodrow Wilson who led the nation during the war; Sgt. Henry Johnson, an African-American soldier who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery during the war; and suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, who helped lead the campaign that led to the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote.

Additional highlights include opening remarks on June 18 by Commissioner Edwin L. Fountain, vice chair of the [U.S. World War I Centennial Commission](#), with a special introduction from the newly crowned Miss Delaware; and "Coming Home, the Toll of War," a two-part program facilitated by Vietnam-War-veteran [Richard Claypoole](#) on June 20 that compares and contrasts the experiences of veterans returning from World War I and the Vietnam War.



Edwin L. Fountain,
vice chair of the
U.S. World War I

Centennial
Commission will
provide opening
remarks on June
18, 2017.

Chautauqua takes its name from a series of adult education programs that were first held at a campsite on the shores of Lake Chautauqua in upstate New York during the late 19th century. Chautauquas spread throughout America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries bringing speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers and specialists of the day to a wide cross-section of the nation's rural and small-town population. Circuit Chautauquas (also known as Tent Chautauquas) were an itinerant manifestation of the movement. Programs would be presented in tents pitched in a field near town. After several days, the Chautauqua would fold its tents and move on to the next community. The popularity of Chautauquas peaked in the mid-1920s, after which radio, movies and automobiles brought about the gradual disappearance of the movement by the 1940s.



Tent from a previous Delaware
Chautauqua.

Reborn in the 1970s as a vehicle for humanities education, modern Chautauquas are organized around a core program in which re-enactors portray celebrated historical figures,

speaking and interacting with audiences. Modern Chautauquas have been presented annually in Delaware since 1999 featuring a wide variety of historical figures including Teddy Roosevelt; Abigail Adams; Abraham Lincoln; Amelia Earhart; Dolley Madison; Eleanor Roosevelt; Edgar Allan Poe; the Lone Ranger; John Philip Sousa; and Delaware's own Pvt. James Elbert, Maj. Allen McLane, F.O.C. Darley and Clifford Brown.

The [Zwaanendael Museum](#) was built in 1931 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the state's first European colony, Swanendael, established by the Dutch along Hoorn Kill (present-day Lewes-Rehoboth Canal) in 1631. Designed by E. William Martin (architect of Legislative Hall and the Hall of Records in Dover), the museum is modeled after the town hall in Hoorn, the Netherlands, and features a stepped facade gable with carved stonework and decorated shutters. The museum's exhibits and presentations provide a showcase for Lewes-area maritime, military and social history.



Zwaanendael Museum

The [Lewes Historical Society](#) is committed to promoting the preservation, interpretation and cultural enrichment of Lewes, Del.—one of America's most historic towns. As part of its mission, the society maintains several beautifully restored historic properties dating from 1665 to 1898. Open for public visitation, these properties, in conjunction with the

society's educational programs and special events, help to tell Lewes' story of maritime adventure, architectural elegance and over 375 years of colonial charm.

-End-

Contact:

Jim Yurasek

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Phone: 302-736-7413

E-mail: Jim.Yurasek@delaware.gov

Web: <http://history.delaware.gov>